

The American News Media and the Assassination of President John F. Kennedy: Accessories After the Fact¹ — Conclusion

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"...the pattern of internal knowledge of conspiracy followed by complete suppression of such knowledge is too strong to ignore."

Part One of this article, published in the June issue of Computers and Automation, dealt with the interlocking nature of the news media and various attempts at blunting independent investigations of the assassination.

The New York Times

The record of the Times through the 1964-1971 period follows the same pattern as the CBS and Life magazine editorial policies.

The early editorials following the Warren Report supported the Commission. The Times cooperated by publishing much of the report in advance. In 1965, however, editorials began to appear questioning the Commission's findings and suggesting a new investigation. In 1964 the Times formed a research team to investigate the assassination, headed by Harrison Salisbury. The team of six included Peter Khiss and Gene Roberts. Their conclusions were never made public by the Times, but indications point to their finding evidence of conspiracy.

Khiss in particular, through the 1966-68 period in several meetings and discussions with the author, expressed doubts about the Warren Report and questioned the lone madman assassin theme. Then, when the Garrison investigation made the news, the Times began a regular campaign to undermine Garrison's case, to support the Warren Commission, and finally during the Clay Shaw trial to completely distort the news and the testimony presented. Martin Waldron was the reporter sending in the stories from the Shaw trial, but someone in New York edited them to completely change their content. The author saw the first day of the trial story as written by Waldron and the final version appearing in the Times. The two were completely different, with Waldron's original following the actual trial proceedings very closely.

The author, writing under a pen name, Samuel B. Thurston, postulated the possibility that The New York Times on selected subjects, including the JFK assassination, is controlled by the CIA through their representative among top management, Mr. Harding Bancroft.²

In the summer of 1968, the author discovered a remarkable similarity between the sketch of the as-

sassin of Dr. King and one of three tramps arrested in Dealey Plaza following the assassination of President Kennedy. Peter Khiss wrote a story about this and it was published by the Times in June 1968. Apparently that was the final straw for Times management as far as Khiss was concerned. He has not been allowed to do any more research on assassinations or to even discuss the subject at the Times since then. As he told the author in 1969, he doesn't attend any press conferences about assassinations because he doesn't like it when people in Times management say, "Here comes crazy old Pete Khiss again with his conspiracy talk".

The acme of The New York Times actions and editorial positions on the JFK assassination came in November and December 1971. They published three items supporting the Warren Commission eight years after the assassination, at a time when it seemed to be a dead issue, at least on the surface.

The first was a story about Dallas eight years later by an author from Texas who wrote his entire story as though it were an established fact that Oswald was the lone madman assassin firing three shots from the sixth floor window of the Depository building and later killing policeman Tippitt.

The second was an Op Ed page guest editorial by none other than David Belin, Warren Commission lawyer. He defended the Commission and attacked the researchers. The third was a story by Fred Graham about the findings of Dr. Lattimer who was allowed to see the autopsy photographs and X-rays. Graham actually wrote most of his story which solidly backed up the Warren Commission due to Lattimer's claims that the autopsy materials proved no conspiracy, before Lattimer ever entered the Archives.

In other words, it appears that Graham knew what Lattimer was going to find and say in advance. Either that, or someone in Washington, D.C. gave someone high up at the Times orders in advance to prepare the story for page 1, upper left-hand corner, of the paper. It really didn't make any difference whether Dr. Lattimer ever saw the X-rays and photos.

The concerted campaign on the part of Times management could have been timed to prevent a discovery of new evidence of conspiracy in the autopsy materials. The reason for this possibility developing in the November 1971 period is that the five year restriction placed on the autopsy evidence by Burke Marshall, Kennedy family lawyer, expired in November 1971. Four well-known and highly reputable forensic pathologists, Dr. Cyril Wecht of Pittsburgh, Dr. John Nichols of the University of Kansas, Dr. Milton Halpern of New York City and Dr. John Chapman of De-

1. Accessories After the Fact is the title of a book by Silvia Meagher published by Bobbs Merrill in 1967, accusing the Warren Commission and the various government agencies of covering up the crime of the century. This article accuses the national news media of the same crimes.

2. Computers and Automation, July 1971.